

the works of Horsfield, Temminck, Bonaparte, Schlegel, and other authorities, and arranged on the system of Prof. Schlegel's 'Dierentuin.' 404 species are enumerated, of which the author claims 14 as due to his explorations of the neighbourhood of Batavia and Mount Salak. Of these 14, one, *Brachypteryx salacensis*, is stated to be new, but no description is given. We are glad to be told that Mr. Vorderman has in preparation a monograph on the birds of Java, on the same plan as Salvadori's excellent work on the birds of Borneo.

111. 'The Young Oologist.'

[The Young Oologist. Vol. I. No. 10. 8vo. Gaines, N. Y.: 1885.]

We have been favoured with a specimen-copy of this newly started journal, which contains a series of communications upon the birds and eggs of North America, and seems likely to foster the study of field-ornithology in the United States.

XXXIII.—Letters, Announcements, &c.

We have received the following letters addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis':—

Irchester Vicarage, Wellingboro',
April 16, 1885.

SIRS,—I am concerned to find that the specific name *cinerascens* cannot stand for my *Parus*, described in the last number of 'The Ibis,' having been previously given to another Titmouse (*P. afer*, Gmelin) by Vieillot (Nouv. Dict. xx. p. 316, 1818); I therefore propose that it should be known as *Parus sarawacensis*.

Yours &c.,

HENRY H. SLATER.

Hawksfold, Fernhurst, Haslemere,
May 23, 1885.

SIRS,—That the birds of the island of Cozumel should have remained unnoticed for upwards of forty years, and have

then supplied two collections, to Mr. Ridgway and myself, almost at the same moment, is unfortunate only as regards the last coincidence, inasmuch as we have supplied several birds each with a superfluous name.

My reason for writing this letter is to ascertain which name is applicable in future to these species.

The facts are these:—My paper was published in your pages on or about April 5 of the present year.

Mr. Ridgway's will form part of the third volume of the Biological Society of Washington, 1884–85. Extra copies of this paper were printed on "February 26, 1885," and posted by Mr. Ridgway to his friends on March 2nd.

The date of its publication I am, as yet, unable to supply.

Personally I am quite ready to accept Mr. Ridgway's names; but I think no harm can be done by asking what is the status of names issued in an "extra" in advance of the actual publication of the periodical of which they are to form a part.

The date of printing is, of course, nothing, and it seems to me that the distribution of printed copies by an author does not technically differ from sending written letters to the same effect to his various correspondents.

Publication is something more than this. I believe that our practice in England is not to issue "extras" to authors until after the actual publication of the paper, and this seems to me to be the right course. In America a different system seems to prevail, and authors can have copies of their papers often many months before their formal publication. In by far the majority of cases no harm is done. Occasionally, as in the present instance, a preliminary distribution clashes with an actual publication.

Yours &c.,

OSBERT SALVIN.

Anniversary of the British Ornithologists' Union.—The Annual Meeting of the B. O. U. was held at 6 Tenterden Street, on Wednesday, the 20th May, at 6 P.M., Mr. SCLATER in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting having been read and confirmed, the B. O. U. Committee presented the following Report :—

Your Committee have much pleasure in pointing out that the B. O. U. continues in a prosperous condition. As compared with last year the finances are in a very satisfactory state, more than half the heavy debt incurred by the publication of the 'Ibis List of British Birds' having been wiped off, while by careful economy the expenses of publication of the Journal have been decreased.

At the last Anniversary Meeting the number of Members amounted to 150, viz. :—124 Ordinary (Mr. Foster having been returned in error as dead), 1 Extraordinary, 9 Honorary, and 16 Foreign Members. At the present Anniversary the total number of Members on the roll has been increased to 174, viz. :—146 Ordinary, 1 Extraordinary, 8 Honorary, and 19 Foreign Members. The Committee are pleased to be able to say there has been only one death among the Members, viz. that of Mr. Arthur Basil Brooke, whose loss will be sincerely regretted by all the Union. The only other vacancy is that caused by Major G. F. L. Marshall, who has resigned. There are 9 Candidates for admission at this Anniversary.

The Accounts for 'The Ibis' for 1884 were then discussed and passed, and the following new Members were balloted for and elected :—James Backhouse, Jun., West Bank, York ; Hugh G. Barclay, F.R.G.S., Thorpe, Norwich ; Capt. E. F. Becher, R.A., F.Z.S., Southwell, Notts ; William Fitzherbert Brockholes, Claughton-on-Brock, Garstang, Lancashire ; F. H. H. Guillemard, M.D., Eltham, Kent ; Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, Thirkleby, Thirsk ; George Lawson, C.B., 36 Craven Hill Gardens, Hyde Park, W. ; John Marshall, F.L.S., Belmont, Taunton ; Edward Neale, 6 Tenterden Street, W. The President and Secretary having been re-elected, Mr. W. T. Blanford, F.R.S., was elected on the Committee in place of Captain Shelley, who retired by rotation.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman (as also to Captain Shelley for the use of his room) was proposed by Mr. F.

DuCane Godman, seconded by Mr. Howard Saunders, and carried unanimously.

The Meeting then adjourned, and the Annual Dinner was held at the Café Royale, and was attended by about twenty-five Members and guests.

New Ornithological Work.—We are glad to hear that Mr. Edward Bartlett, Curator of the Maidstone Museum, has been for some years collecting materials for a great work on the Ploceidæ and Fringillidæ, upon which his MS. is becoming very voluminous. He has besides a fine collection of the birds themselves, and will feel truly grateful for odd papers or notes on any of the species. Mr. Bartlett says that the work has been a labour of love to him, with little idea of compensation, and he hopes it will be of value to science, as well as to persons who are fond of this beautiful group of birds in confinement.

Prjevalsky's New Expedition.—The 'Times' of May 25th publishes a letter from Col. Prjevalsky dated Lob Nor, Feb. 10th, in which he states that the collections of natural history during the present expedition "are not inconsiderable. The poorest is that of the birds—1000 specimens—of which one only is new, *Leucosticte robowoskii*."

"We have passed the autumn and winter in the western regions of Zaidan and Northern Tibet, where we made many geographical discoveries. We arrived at Lob Nor yesterday, and shall pass the month of February here, observing the migration of birds. In March we shall start for the town of Kiria, where our collections, loaded on ten camels, will remain, while we pass the summer in the mountains of Northern Tibet, with the intention of re-entering Turkestan in the autumn. We have heard no news from Europe for twelve months, and have not seen another human being for three months."

The Ridgway Ornithological Club, Chicago, U.S.A.—March 5th, 1885. J. L. Hancock read a paper on the Birds of Corpus

Christi, Texas, recording ninety-four species observed in March and April 1884.—April 2nd. A specimen of Swainson's Warbler (*Helminthus swainsoni*), lent by Mr. Brewster, was exhibited. A paper was read by Dr. Gibbs on the Woodpeckers of Michigan. Mr. H. K. Coale gave a bird-skinning exposition.—May 15th. Mr. Coale read a paper containing notes on the Birds of Arizona.

Birds breeding in Ants' Nests.—Two interesting letters on this subject have lately appeared in 'Nature.' These, with the kind permission of the Editor of 'Nature,' we reproduce. The first is from Mr. W. Davison, who writes from Ootacamund, Jan. 18th, and says, in reply to inquiries from Mr. Grant Duff ('Nature,' vol. xxxi. p. 438):—

"The Southern Chestnut Woodpecker (*Micropternus gularis*) always, as far as I have observed, uses an ants' nest to nest in, and Mr. Gammie, the Superintendent of the Government Cinchona Estates at Mongphoo, near Darjeeling, has noticed the same thing with regard to the allied northern species, *Micropternus phaiiceps*; and the peculiarity probably extends also to the allied species found in Burmah, Siam, &c.

"Mr. Gammie thinks that when an ants' nest has been taken possession of by the bird the ants desert the nest. This is a point on which I cannot speak with certainty. Mr. Gammie has taken nests of the northern species in which, although the bird had laid, the ants remained, and he has taken other nests where not a single ant remained; but there is nothing to show that these nests were not deserted before the bird took possession. I myself have taken nests of the southern form, in which, though the eggs were partially incubated, the ants remained, showing that some considerable time must have elapsed since the bird took possession. This is a point that I hope to be able to elucidate within the next few months, when the birds will be breeding.

"When *Micropternus* is breeding the feathers of the head, tail, and primaries of the wings get covered with a viscid matter, having a strong resinous smell, and this substance is

usually rather thickly studded with dead ants (*vide* 'Stray Feathers,' vol. vi. p. 145).

"Two species of Kingfishers also to my knowledge nidificate in ants' nests—viz. *Halcyon occipitalis*, confined to the Nicobar Islands, and *H. chloris*, which ranges from India as far south as Sumatra.

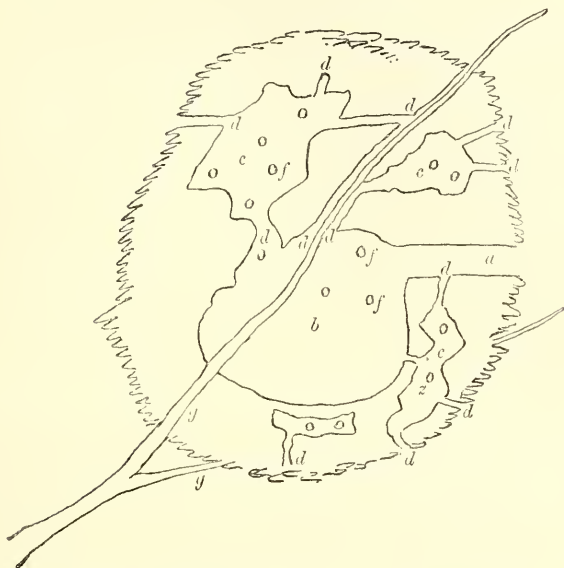
"At Mergui, in South Tenasserim, I found a nest of *H. chloris* in a hornets' nest, and although I saw the birds repeatedly enter the hole they had made in the hornets' nest the hornets did not seem to mind it, but they resented in a very decided manner my attempt to interfere with the nest."

In the number of 'Nature' for May (vol. xxxii. p. 52) is the following letter from Mr. Charles Bingham, Deputy Conservator of Forests, British Burmah, on the same subject:—

"Camp Meplay, Thoung-yeen Valley, Tenasserim,
April 20, 1882.

"This morning, in going from my camp to the Meplay Forest Reserve, I had to pass through several densely overgrown phonzohs. While making my way along with some difficulty, I startled a brown Woodpecker (*Micropternus phaeocephus*) from a small pyingado tree (*Xylia dolabriformis*). Looking up into the branches I saw a large ants' nest, in the centre of which appeared a circular hole so exactly like the borings made by Woodpeckers ordinarily in the trunks of trees, that I sent up a Karen boy who was with me to ascertain whether it was possible the *Micropternus* had been boring into the ants' nest, as I had heard was the bird's curious habit. The ants' nest was only about ten feet above the ground, placed in the fork of the pyingado, two small branches of which passed clean through it. Climbing up, putting in his fingers and then a twig, my Karen follower announced that there were two eggs. Leaving the nest alone for the time being, in the evening I returned by the same route, and was able not only to cut off and carry into camp the whole nest as it was; but I managed to secure also the bird as she flew from the eggs. Arrived in camp, I

got the two eggs out, and then very carefully made a cross-section through the ants' nest, so as to divide the boring made by the Woodpecker longitudinally.



a, entrance-tunnel made by Woodpecker; *b*, retort-shaped nesting-chamber of Woodpecker; *c*, excavations made by the ants; *d d d . . . d*, entrances to them; *f f f . . . f*, tunnels made by the ants; *g g*, fork of pyngado branch—one twig passing through the egg-chamber excavated by the Woodpecker.

“The accompanying is a rough diagrammatic sketch of the appearance of the cross-section of the nest as hollowed out by the Woodpeckers. The ants' nest was a large spherical solid mass of leaves and clay, the leaves outside being arranged one over the other something like the tiles on the roof of a house, but riddled in many places with the entrance-tunnels made by the ants—a small black and red species of *Myrmica*, the trivial or specific name of which I do not know. It is probably closely allied to the *Myrmica* mentioned by Sir J. Lubbock in his ‘Ants, Bees, Wasps,’ as having been described by Sykes in the ‘Trans. Ent. Soc.’ vol. i. Very few of the ants remained in the nest, and the

few that were about seemed agitated and stung virulently. Probably the mass of them had been driven off or eaten by the Woodpeckers. The tunnel the latter had made was about two inches in diameter and four inches long, bored horizontally in, and ending in an irregular-shaped egg-chamber about ten and a half inches in cross diameter, but narrowed by the branch of pyingado, which pierced the nest through and through, and crossed the egg-chamber diagonally. The bottom of this chamber alone was smooth, but there was no lining, and the two translucent white eggs of the Woodpecker had rested on the bare boards, so to speak, of the ants' house. In the excavations *c c c* made by the ants themselves there were neither eggs, larvæ, nor pupæ; probably these all had been removed when the Woodpeckers invaded the nest."

Birds at Scotch Lighthouses.—At the meeting of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh held on the 20th of May last, the Secretary drew the attention of the meeting to several interesting birds that had been taken during the month on the island of May by Mr. Agnew, lighthouse keeper, and forwarded to Mr. J. A. Harvie-Brown, in whose collection they have since been placed. These were two specimens of the Ortolan Bunting and others of the Pied Flycatcher and Red-backed Shrike. The Secretary remarked that these birds had appeared during their spring migration, and that in the case of the Ortolan Bunting, the capture proved that any Scotch specimens of the birds that have been recorded could not be said to be escaped birds, seeing that they had been in company with well-known migratory species, and were in all likelihood on their way to Scandinavia, where they are known to breed.

Mr. R. B. Sharpe's Departure for Simla.—In our last Number (*suprà*, p. 236) we spoke of the negotiations going on for the transfer of Mr. Hume's celebrated collection of Indian birds to the British Museum. Mr. Sharpe started for Simla the end of April to superintend the packing

of the collection, which will shortly be on its way home. Writing from the s.s. 'Aucon,' in the Red Sea, on May 5th, he complains much of the intense heat. "It is just as well," he says, "that one of the Editors of 'The Ibis' is not on board. He would tear his hair at seeing about twenty specimens of *Larus hemprichi* in full breeding-plumage following the ship, and not to be got at. But I hope to obtain some at Aden. A small Tern of the group *S. minuta* was common near Suez, and again off Perim, where a larger Tern with a black head also appeared in pairs. The only other birds seen were a few Gannets (brown with belly white) and a Kite and a Stonechat going north."

Obituary.—ERNEST WILLIAM WHITE, whose untimely death was briefly recorded in our last Number, was born at Eythorne, near Dover, on the 20th June, 1858, and when six years of age accompanied his parents to South America. Very delicate from birth, it was with great difficulty that he was reared. Books were forbidden him, and thus, untrammelled, he roamed abroad and communed with nature, early displaying a fondness for everything that lived. But it was when Henry Durnford came to Buenos Ayres that White's passion for natural history burst forth. They were bosom companions, and it was only by his father's command that White was debarred from accompanying Durnford in his last ill-fated expedition.

At his own request White was now sent to London to make the acquaintance of naturalists. He there became a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London, and entered into arrangements with Mr. Edward Gerrard, jun., to perfect himself in the preparation of specimens. During his residence in London, White, in his passion for learning, took no heed of weather, and thus developed tuberculosis, the seeds of which were in him from his birth. He was consequently called home, and on the voyage burst a blood-vessel on the lungs and lost a great quantity of blood. He scarcely reached home alive, and was then instantly despatched to Mendoza, where he was enabled to gratify his passion for

natural history in a new and little-explored region and, by roughing it, to regain health and strength.

For five years in this district White roamed about, sleeping amongst the snows, travelling on mule-back, battered and tossed by wind and rain, dust and heat, until at last he returned home robust, and sought for a wife ready to accompany and aid him in future toil. He found her and married; and then the next thing was to consider, as he had now contracted obligations, how to choose a profession that should first pay the expenses of his future explorations, and secondly occupy the minimum of time in preparation.

His first idea was medicine, which he had studied in Buenos Ayres previously; but considering that all the dentists of Buenos Aires are rich men, and that the teeth of Argentines are about the worst in the world, he fixed upon dentistry, which he could combine with natural history in his projected travels, wherein he was determined to exhaust the Argentine Republic.

White first tried the London schools; but the restrictions were so onerous and the climate so bad, that he was forced to migrate to Philadelphia. Here, after his two years' course, he was on the point of attaining his qualification, when a wave of malignant typhoid fever swept over the city and carried White away amidst its earliest victims, on the 29th of November last, at the early age of 26 years.

DR. EDUARD RÜPPELL.—The death of Dr. Eduard Rüppell, of Frankfort-on-the-Main, which we announced in our last Number (see p. 238), cannot be allowed to pass in this Journal without honourable notice of so eminent a traveller and naturalist.

Dr. Rüppell was born in Frankfort on the 20th November, 1794, the son of an official in the postal service of the Grand Duchy of Hesse. After leaving the Gymnasium he was placed in business; but his love for natural history led him to visit Egypt as early as 1817, after which he became resident in Italy. The assistance rendered to him by the Senckenbergian Society of Naturalists, which was founded in that year in his native city, enabled Rüppell to attend

regular classes at the Universities of Pavia and Genoa, and thus to prepare himself carefully for scientific travel. The result was the two great expeditions of 1822 and 1832. In the first of these Rüppell explored Egypt, Nubia, and Kordofan. This expedition, as well as the second, of which the object was the exploration of the then almost unknown fauna of Abyssinia, resulted in the discovery of a large number of new species in every branch of natural history, besides establishing many others up to that time very little known. The number of new birds discovered by Rüppell amounted to 130 at least, and his labours in the cause of ornithology in these countries must always place his name amongst those of the first rank in the history of the birds of Africa. Indeed Rüppell's works have formed the ground upon which all subsequent labours on the ornithology of North-eastern Africa have been based.

The three works which bring everlasting fame to the name of Rüppell are :—(1) The 'Atlas zu der Reise im nördlichen Afrika,' published at Frankfort in 1826 ; (2) his 'Neue Wirbelthiere zu der Fauna von Abyssinien gehörig' (Frankfort, 1835) ; and (3) his 'Systematische Uebersicht der Vögel Nordost-Afrika's' (1845).

The last-mentioned work, in 8vo, contains a summary of the ornithological portions of the two former, and is further remarkable for the excellent illustrations annexed to it, prepared by the master hand of Joseph Wolf. Besides these great works Rüppell published several smaller ornithological memoirs, chiefly in the 'Abhandlungen' of the Museum Senckenbergianum. He also contributed a paper containing descriptions of two new species of Touraco to the 'Transactions of the Zoological Society of London,' of which Society Rüppell was at the time of his death the senior Foreign Member.

As is well known, Rüppell gave the whole of his rich collections to the Senckenbergian Institution of his native city, where every opportunity is offered to those who wish to examine the typical specimens. It is also to one of Rüppell's trained collectors, Martin Bretzka, that science is indebted

for our first acquaintance with the birds of Shoa, in Southern Abyssinia. Rüppell died at Frankfort in the 91st year of his age.

We are much indebted to Dr. H. Schalow for the subjoined notice of Dr. Richard Boehm, the well-known African traveller and ornithologist :—

DR. RICHARD BOEHM.—By a short note, received through Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs, of Zanzibar, we are informed of the death of the well-known young zoologist Dr. Richard Boehm. The words of the telegram leave no doubt that the unfortunate traveller has been murdered by the wild tribes westward of lake Tanganyika, but the exact locality where this took place is not yet known. It is much to be regretted that all the rich ornithological collections and most of the notes made during Boehm's five years' stay in Eastern Africa have been lost, except a few specimens collected in Kakoma and on the Ugalla river. In this lamentable way has ended, at the early age of 30 years, the career of one of the most promising young zoologists of Germany. Richard Boehm was born at Berlin, October 1st, 1857, the eldest son of Dr. Boehm, a distinguished physician. After his zoological studies at the Universities of Jena and Berlin, under the direction of Haeckel, Peters, Cabanis, and others, Boehm devoted himself especially to ornithology, and prepared for his African travels. In April 1880 he left Germany. During the following five years he visited the countries between Zanzibar and Lake Tanganyika, mostly never explored by a zoologist. In 1882 all the collections, journals, maps, and drawings of Boehm were destroyed by fire. A year later the traveller received two shots through his thigh from a native. After his recovery he set out to explore the country near lake Moero (between long. 28° E. and lat. 8° S.), never visited by any European naturalist, and here, probably, he met his death.

Among the scientific papers of the late Dr. Boehm, we may call special attention to "*Helgolander Leptomedusen*" (*Jenaische Zeitschrift*, Band xii.), "*Ueber die Pycnogoniden*"

(Bericht der Akad. d. Wissensch. Berlin, 1879; often mentioned and well spoken of in Hoek's Pycnogonidæ of the 'Challenger' Expedition), besides various papers on African ornithology published in the 'Ornithologisches Centralblatt' and in the 'Journal für Ornithologie.' A short account of the birds collected by Boehm has been published by Dr. Schalow (J. f. O. 1883, p. 337); a second paper will follow in the next number of that periodical.

To Boehm are dedicated the genus *Boehmia* of Hoek and many species of Eastern African birds.

News of Dr. Finsch.—Our excellent correspondent Dr. O. Finsch of Bremen, who disappeared from Europe somewhat mysteriously more than a year ago, and was generally supposed to have been sent off by Prince Bismark to take possession of New Guinea for the Fatherland, writes to us from Mioko, Duke-of-York Island, under date of the 27th of February last. Dr. Finsch preserves a judicious reticence as to the exact business he has been transacting, but admits that he has "travelled a good deal in New Guinea, and visited parts of that island where scarcely any white men have been before." But he also announces an important ornithological discovery. At Cooktown, in the preceding month, he had purchased a fine collection of birds just made on the southern slopes of the Owen-Stanley range, in New Guinea, at an elevation of from 7000 to 8000 feet. Amongst many rare birds in this collection were some quite new and of great beauty—a new Paradise-bird of prevailing *blue* colour and a new form allied to *Astrapia*, both generically distinct, and a most wonderful new *Amblyornis*, with a bright flame-coloured crest. These novelties have been transmitted to Dr. A. B. Meyer, of Dresden, for description.

New Expeditions.—Mr. H. O. Forbes, having issued his 'Naturalist's Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago,' with a full account of his last journey, has started again for the East, this time having the Owen-Stanley range, in New Guinea, for his principal object. He will call at Taentre

and pick up his trained staff of Moluccan bird-hunters. Mr. Forbes has, we believe, received excellent promises of support from some of the Australian colonies, and bears letters of introduction to Sir Peter Scratchley, the newly appointed Governor of "Torresia," as, we suggest, the portion of Southern New Guinea which Prince Bismark has kindly allowed us to retain ought to be called.

Two pupils of Prof. Moseley, who have recently distinguished themselves in the "Science Schools," are likewise shortly leaving England for opposite quarters of the globe. Mr. G. C. Bourne departs for Diego Garcia, the southernmost island of the Chagos group, in the Indian Ocean, never before visited by a naturalist, and said to be tenanted by peculiar land-birds and other endemic creatures. Mr. W. L. Selater goes to British Guiana, to spend the winter under the hospitable roof of Mr. E. F. im Thurn, when he will pay some attention to the birds of the Pomeroon River, and especially to the four-footed embryos of *Opisthocomus* (*suprà*, p. 118), if he can find them! Both these youthful explorers have promised to report progress to the Editors of 'The Ibis.'

New Work on the Swallows.—Messrs. Henry Sotheman & Co. have issued the prospectus of a 'Monograph of the Hirundinidæ,' or Family of Swallows, to be prepared by Mr. R. Bowdler Sharpe and Mr. Claude W. Wyatt. The work will be issued in parts at 10s. 6d. each, and completed in seventeen or eighteen parts, of which Mr. Sharpe will prepare the letterpress and Mr. Wyatt the plates. It will be nearly uniform in general character with the well-known 'Monograph of the Kingfishers' by the former.